

THE  
RULES  
OF  
LIFE

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# **THE RULES OF LIFE**

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# *Introduction*

The Rules of Life was written for my children, Valerie & J. Blaine. It is designed to bring truth into their lives. While some of the rules, at first glance, may appear to be only humorous, their purpose is not humor. Some of the rules may seem to be deeply profound, but the purpose of the writing is not profundity. On the contrary, I have endeavored to make them as simple and communicable as possible. Like Solomon, in Proverbs, I am writing for my children. Those who know me will certainly attest that I am no Solomon. I have tried, however, to share the things that I have learned about living, living with others, and most of all living with myself. Since you are reading this, and you are not my child, I hope that you will learn from these, but the original purpose was not to share them with others. That has just sort of grown out of my reference to these rules and friends asking me about them. I hope you enjoy looking one more time with me at the lessons I have learned that are unchanging; the Rules of Life.

5. It will feel better, or soon and stop hurting.
6. You can't get to the right place by going in the wrong direction.

# THE RULES OF LIFE

1. People are stupid.
2. We are people.
3. Things that are different are not the same.
4. Wherever you find yourself in life there you are.
5. It will feel better, as soon as it stops hurting.
6. You can't get to the right place by going in the wrong direction.
7. Dance like nobody's watching.
8. No one can make you feel anything, unless you let them.
9. Don't quit.
10. Act now, live life on purpose.

## *Rule #1*

### People are stupid.

I can hear it now, "What an awful thing to say.", "That sure is negative.". I'm not prepared to accept that., etc. etc. etc.

Not so, the reason you say that is proof of the rule. Let me explain.

I did not say that people do not have a measurable degree of intelligence. I did not say that people don't have any talents or abilities. People are stupid refers to our predisposition to wandering aimlessly through life, forgetting the lessons we've supposedly already learned. We find that we must learn the same lessons over & over. The reason is because we behave stupidly. We talk of our lessons learned, when in reality we haven't learned. We are doomed to repeat our same mistakes over and over, unless we learn. Learning begins with admitting that we haven't learned.

We must admit that we are stupid. Although, we make much of our selective learning processes, we have no real retention of life lessons. Many of the questions of life, such as, "I wonder why {they, we, I} did that {or did not do that}?", "What was I thinking?", "Why didn't I stop and think?", etc., can easily be answered by referring to rule #1.

How many times have you heard yourself say, "I knew it" or "I knew better, but I did it anyway."

Please refer to rule #1.

### People are stupid.

## *Rule #2*

### We are people.

This is a very important rule. A good friend of mine, Dr. Jim Brown, has said for years that two great snares of life are finding out that you're right about something &/or that someone else is wrong about something. These need not occur at the same time. The dangerous snare is assuming that because we're right about one thing, we're right about everything, &/or that because someone else is wrong about one thing they're wrong about everything. Neither of these is true. The real danger of learning rule #1 is that you will assume that it only applies to other people. Hence the valuable lesson of rule #2. All of the rules apply to us also.

### We are people.

## *Rule #3*

Things that are different are not the same.

While this would seem to be patently obvious, it is really one of the more difficult lessons to actually learn.

Consider the following:

"{Son, daughter, spouse, employee, etc.} I need {or want} you to do A B C 1 2 3 {fill in the blank}.

"Okay."

Pause here for several minutes, hours, days, etc.

"Did you do as I asked?"

"No, I did this {fill in the blank} instead."

To complicate matters more, sometimes they will lie and say yes, they did. Upon examination they explain how & why they did something different.

Time out for an oxygen break here, so the mind can be refreshed.

Listen carefully. Things that are different are not the same.

The NKJV, NIV, NRSB, NASB, LB, GNFMM, etc. are not the same as the KJV. Furthermore, you don't need a library full of critical & defensive texts to prove it, simply refer the doubters to rule #3.

My wife will go to the beauty shop and come back with a haircut. She looks fine. I ask,

"How much hair did you have cut off?"

"About this much", she answers while holding up two fingers spread apart to approximate the measurement of hair removed. Then she will look at me with total innocence and say, "It's okay, it's the same as it was".

?????? Pardon me for being so stupid but, I don't see how it can be.

Time and tongue would fail me to recount the many examples from our governments {federal, state, county/parish, and local} and the corporate world. You could probably supply me with several. Change this & that they cry. Don't worry it's the same as it was. If it is the same, why did you say we needed to change it? NO!!!!!!

Things that are different are not the same.

## *Rule #4*

Wherever you find yourself in life there you are.

This is a great truth. It will work in map orientation class and all other areas of your life. This rule, learned, will teach this lesson. It does no good to wish, hope, or pray to be somewhere else, you're not.

It is useless to cry about who you are, the opportunities you've missed, how unfair life is, and so forth. You are what you are, but you can change what you will be. You are where you are, because you directed yourself there. Quit whining & moaning for what is not, and learn this lesson. You control your future, to a very great extent. But God made me, made me do *yaddah, yaddah, yaddah*.

God never intended that anyone be miserable serving Him. He said you can have love, joy, & peace. He said you were a conqueror, always triumphant. He said that you could and should live an abundant life. Do not be discouraged by life.

Anyone that is anywhere had to begin where they were.

Here you are. Plan where you'd like to go & enjoy the trip.

Wherever you find yourself in life there you are.

## *Rule #5*

*It will feel better, as soon as it stops hurting.*

My chiropractor in Louisiana used to tell me that after an especially hard session. My dad, and every other sadist in the county, used to tell me the same thing. The problem is that until just a few years ago, when I pastored my first church, I had no idea that it was anything other than a trite phrase used to frustrate children. Then I began to meet people who wore their pain like a badge of honor. They couldn't wait to tell you the who, what, when, where, & why of how they'd been done wrong. This became an obsession, their whole life. Sure enough, as long as they would dwell on their wound, it would continue to hurt.

The lesson is the same my dad tried to teach me when I would fall off my bike. Get up, get back on & ride and pretty soon it won't hurt anymore. If you'll stop picking at your emotional wounds, they will start healing. They will stop hurting. It will feel better. Pretty soon you'll be back on top, enjoying life again.

*It will feel better, as soon as it stops hurting.*

## *Rule #6*

You can't get to the right place by going in the wrong direction.

This must be another rule that proves rule #1. If you wanted to visit Washington, D.C. and lived in Dallas, TX, you would have several options for travel.

Unless time was of no importance, however, one option you would rule out immediately would be to go west.

This world is full of people that have indistinct, undefined goals that really would like to go "somewhere nice". This world is full of people that want to avoid going to any "bad" destinations, such as divorce, alcoholism, or other substance abuse. We want love, respect, and a supportive network of friends. We think, we want, we wish, we hope, but evidently many have never learned the truth of this simple rule.

Look at where you are now. Satisfied? You are exactly where you have been heading. It's impossible to arrive someplace without going there!

"But I want to be in \_\_\_\_\_." you say. Okay, then admit that you've been wrong.

Decide, with God's guidance, where you want to be. Head in the right direction {towards where you want to go}.

You can't arrive at a place of happiness by traveling in the direction of temporary fulfillment.

You can't get to the right place by going in the wrong direction.

## *Rule #7*

### Dance like nobody's watching.

Here is a vote for spontaneity. It is more than that, however. Here is a vote for enjoying life to the fullest. Here is my vote for being yourself. Here is the rule that says I wasn't put here to please you, and I can't live my life that way.

Okay, so maybe my clothes aren't the latest fashion.

Maybe I don't know all the latest expressions or the newest fads; maybe I haven't seen all the movies, heard all the music, or played all the games that you have, so what? I belong to only One, and you're not God. My intent is to please Him. So, the rule does not say go out and dance. The rule says that what we do, if it is to be a blessing to us & others, we should learn to enjoy. When others criticize us, because they think we should do it differently, we realize that they are not the final authority. So whatever you do, enjoy it. Whether work or play, home or away, ministry or self, stop worrying about what others will say and go for it. I am not talking about self-destructive behavior. I am not talking about refusing to take advice. Folks in those categories are not enjoying life at all, although they would certainly argue the point. We are talking about what you do, which is right {proper}, doing with your own style, a certain sense of abandon, getting caught up in the enthusiasm of doing what you like and liking what you do.

Learn to laugh at the world, and most of all, learn to laugh at yourself. Learn to laugh with the world and with yourself.

Dance like nobody's watching.

## *Rule #8*

No one can make you feel anything, unless you let them.

I believe a version of this statement originated with Eleanor Roosevelt. It doesn't matter where it was first uttered, or by whom. It is definitely one of the great rules of life.

You've heard it said, They make me so mad. They just get on my nerves. They intimidate me. They are so frustrating. They think that they are so \_\_\_\_\_. They, they, they..... are not the problem. The problem is that you have given yourself permission to feel certain things, in certain situations, with certain people. Why? The reasons {excuses} are probably as varied as the people who offer them. The truth is that you're letting your emotions rule you & your life, instead of stopping the merry-go-round and taking control {responsibility}.

It would be wise to look at these others, whose opinions you value so highly, and try to understand why you're willing to give them control of your life. Before God, until you learn to be master of your own emotions you are doomed to be their servant.

No one can make you feel anything, unless you let them.

## *Rule #9*

### Don't quit.

Once you learn to make right decisions and are headed in the right direction, don't quit. Don't undo in doubt what you did in faith. Don't quit. Don't quit on your faith. Don't quit on your {heavenly} father. Don't quit on your family. Don't quit on your ministry. Don't ever give up your dreams. Claim the promise of Proverbs 28:20 and determine to be faithful. Don't quit. It is a great truth that most who lose could have won if they had just stuck it out. When you become defeated in your mind & heart, your next urge will be to quit. Don't quit.

Here is a favorite verse of mine: "A winner is only a loser that won't admit defeat. A loser is just a winner that refuses to compete. Here is a truth that will encourage you, if you can remember it. A diamond is just a chunk of coal that simply didn't quit."

### Don't quit.

## *Rule #10*

### Act now. Live life on purpose.

You have lots of dreams. You've learned to set goals. You have plans, hopes, aspirations, and desires. You have intelligence, you love, and you're helpful. None of these will amount to anything unless you learn to act on them. There is within you a guiding light. There is within you a still, small voice that tells you what to do. Learn to act on them. When you have the urge to do something, ask yourself three questions. Is it a good thing {not in violation of God's word}? Yes?, then proceed. Will it harm anyone? No?, then proceed. Can I see myself doing it? Yes?, then proceed. Do it! No, you are not ever going to do it someday, do it now. If you love someone, tell them today. If you have a prayer to pray, pray it today. If you have a blessing to share do it today. Live this day as if it were your last, for one day {all too soon} it will be. Courageous action is the antidote for procrastination. Procrastination is fear and an unstable character. Live life on purpose. I will share with you one last truth. Happiness and success may not be the fruit of your actions. However, without action, all fruit will die on the vine. It is more glorious to try & fail than to flounder.

### Act now. Live life on Purpose

I hope you enjoyed reading this and that it was a blessing and an encouragement to you. I welcome your input. You may contact me by writing to: